

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SP-02 L-01 INR-05 PM-03

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DODE-00 /039 W

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O 242236Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8419

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO

S E C R E T TEGUCIGALPA 4591

LIMDIS

GUATEMALA PASS ROCAP

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, ES, HO

SUBJECT: CONTINUING GOH CABINET CRISIS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 4496 AND 4493

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. TODAY, OCTOBER 24, 1974, CHIEF OF STATE OSWALDO LOPEZ ARELLANO TOLD ME THAT HE DIFINITELY PLANS TO ASK ALL MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET FOR THEIR RESIGNATION AND THAT HE HAS DECIDED TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF FONMIN CESAR A. BATRES. END SUMMARY.

2. GENERAL LOPEZ SAID THAT WHILE HE WAS NOT SURE HE WOULD ACCEPT ALL RESIGNATIONS TENDERED, HE FELT THAT SOME DEFINITE CHANGES WERE NECESSARY IN THAT FOR SOME
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TIME NOW HE HAS WITNESSED MARKED PERSONAL DIFFERENCES

EXHIBITED AT COUNCIL MEETINGS AMONG MINECON ABRAHAM BENNATON RAMOS, MINLAB GAUTAMA FONSECA ON ONE SIDE, AND FINMIN MANUEL ACOSTA BONILLA ON THE OTHER (WITH ACOSTA BONILLA OFTEN SUPPORTED BY PLANNING COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MANLIO MARTINEZ). SHARPEST DIFFERENCES SEEMED TO EXIST BETWEEN BENNATON RAMOS AND ACOSTA BONILLA. THE GENERAL DESCRIBED THE DIFFERENCES AS PERSONAL AND EXPLAINED THAT THE MINISTERS HAD KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR YEARS AND WORKED TOGETHER PROFESSIONALLY BUT THAT BRINGING THEM TOGETHER INTO THE CABINET SEEMED TO PLACE THEM WHERE PERSONAL DIFFERENCES WERE TOO OFTEN MANIFEST. HE SAID THAT ON AT LEAST TWO OCCASIONS RECENTLY HE HAD TO ACT AS REFEREE, AND THAT THE DIFFERENCES HAD BECOME PARTICULARLY POINTED DURING THE PRESENTATIONS BY FONMIN BATRES ON THE MATTER OF HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR NEGOTIATIONS.

3. THE PROFFERED RESIGNATIONS OF FONSECA AND BENNATON HAVE NOT YET BEEN ACCEPTED, BUT THE DELAY - MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE - WAS DUE TO THE GENERAL'S APPARENT HOPE THAT BATRES MIGHT WISH TO RECONSIDER HIS RESIGNATION AFTER HIS TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES. (BOTH BENNATON AND FONSECA HAD SUBMITTED THEIR RESIGNATIONS AS ACTS OF SOLIDARITY WITH BATRES).

4. COMMENT: GENERAL LOPEZ APPARENTLY FEELS THAT ACCEPTING ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF RESIGNATIONS MIGHT PROVE EVEN MORE HARMFUL IF THIS ACT WERE SEEN AS A LEANING IN THE DIRECTION OF ONE FACTION OR ANOTHER; THAT AN OVERALL CABINET SHUFFLE WOULD PREVENT HIS BEING SEEN AS AN ADVOCATE OF ANY ONE SIDE.

5. GENERAL LOPEZ DESCRIBED IN DETAIL THE LONG STANDING SERIES OF VERBAL JOUSTS ERUPTING IN CABINET MEETINGS FROM TIME TO TIME, MOSTLY FROM COMPLAINTS FROM BENNATON THAT ACOSTA BONILLA TO OFTEN ATTEMPTED TO "BLOCK" HIS PLANS OR PROGRAMS. MANLIO MARTINEZ OFTEN SIDED WITH ACOSTA BONILLA. BOTH FONSECA AND BENNATON
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(AND ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION, EVEN BATRES) SUGGESTED TO GENERAL LOPEZ THAT ACOSTA BONILLA SEEMED TO HAVE "OVERRIDING (DEMASIADAS)" POLITICAL AMBITIONS.

6. THE CHIEF OF STATE IS NOW IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING A RADIO AND TV ADDRESS TO ANNOUNCE THE CHANGES.

SANCHEZ

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